

Remarks

Originally, claims 1 to 4 were included in the application. Applicants have cancelled claims 2 and 3 and added new claims 5 and 6. Accordingly, claims 1 and 4 to 6 are currently pending in this application.

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested. The Examiner rejected claims 1 through 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Madrigal et al. in view of Ward et al. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended to overcome the prior art. In particular, claims 1 and 4 include the limitation that "the air bag having a skin and a portion of that skin closes the opening" Neither Madrigal nor Ward disclose an air bag having a skin and a portion of that skin closes the opening. Ward discloses a door 26 for closing the opening. *See*, Ward, Figure 1. Madrigal discloses a perforated paper cover 32 which encloses the folded air bag 10 and inflator 16. *See*, Ward, column 3, lines 48-49 and Figure 17. Accordingly, claims 1 and 4 are distinguishable over Madrigal in view of Ward.

New claims 5 and 6 are allowable because they depend from claims 1 and 3, as well as for their own specific limitations recited therein. For instance, the prior art does not disclose or suggest that the skin that closes the opening is flush with the vehicle instrument panel.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes the Office Action of August 21, 2001 has been fully responded to. Consequently, in view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully contends that the application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully requested.

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claims 1 and 4 as shown below.

1. (Amended) An occupant protection system for deploying a deployable air bag from a concealed location in a vehicle instrument panel having an opening, the protection system comprising:

an air bag normally containable in a deflated condition adjacent the opening and deployable through the opening as a protection for the occupant; and

the air bag having a skin and a portion of that skin closes [including an air bag portion for closing] the opening when the air bag is deflated, and remaining as a portion of the air bag after the air bag is deployed.

4. (Amended) In combination, a vehicle having an air bag deployable upon vehicle impact and an occupant protection system for deploying a deployable air bag from a concealed location in a vehicle instrument panel having an opening, the protection system comprising:

an air bag normally containable in a deflated condition adjacent the opening and deployable upon vehicle impact through the opening as a protection for the occupant; and

the air bag having a skin and a portion of that skin closes [including an air bag portion for closing] the opening when the air bag is deflated and remaining as a portion of the air bag after the air bag is deployed.

Add new claims 5 and 6 as follows:

5. (New) The occupant protection system of claim 1 wherein the skin that closes the opening is flush with the vehicle instrument panel.

6. (New) The combination of claim 4 wherein the skin that closes the opening is flush with the vehicle instrument panel.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference will advance the prosecution of this application, such a conference is highly encouraged at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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